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Article Last Updated: 02/18/2005 01:00:46 AM

# Salt Lake County planners in dispute with landowner

Zone change?: He says he needs access to his land to remove and sell rocks

By Derek P. Jensen The Salt Lake Tribune

Salt Lake County planners say an illegal road cut near the mouth of Parleys Canyon could really become the pits.

They have cited landowner Ira Sachs with a class B misdemeanor. Sachs retaliated by requesting a zone change on the property east of Salt Lake City.

Sachs says he simply needs access to his land to remove - and sell - some rocks. But planners worry the request could signal a repeat of the county's tussle with Harper's quarry, located directly across that part of the canyon.

"The problem is, once you create the zoning designation, it's there permanently," says Jeff Daugherty, director of planning and development for Salt Lake County. "He could technically open a pit, albeit a small one, for sand and gravel mining."

Sachs, who recently engineered a land swap with Harper's owner, says he has no industrial interest other than to sell the boulders to landscaping companies.

"I'm not asking for a quarry," he said Thursday. "I'm just asking to pick up surface rocks."

The area, located about two miles from the mouth of Parleys Canyon on the south side, is visible from the road. And that bothers County Councilwoman Jenny Wilson.

"I've been up there. I've looked at what Ira claims to want to do," she said. "But I think there's more to the story."

Councilman Jim Bradley worries a rezone would violate the canyon's master plan.

He says the county has an obligation to protect Parleys, particularly because it serves as the access route to Park City and its "international interest."

Daugherty, who says the road puts "a big gouge" in the hillside, notes planners will likely



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decline Sachs' rezone request. And, he says, a judge could eventually force Sachs to fix the road at the landowner's expense.

"They could make him redo the hillside, revegetate it and stabilize it," Daugherty said.

County officials recently fought this battle with Harper's quarry before their rezone crusade was squelched by

court action last year.

Sachs hopes this time will be different. As an incentive, he is dangling 25 to 30 acres at the mouth of Parleys near the Interstate 215 bridge for the county to maintain as open space.

If the offer is rejected, Sachs has threatened to sue the county.

"If we can't use [the 4.5 acres] there's no other use for the property," Sachs said. "Then, it's a form of confiscation."

Daugherty says to prevent a precedent, the county's industrial objections will remain rock-solid.

"We're holding his feet to the fire."

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